



CALTRANS COMMUTER ALERT

12-274

Date: Friday, November 30, 2012
District: 8 - Riverside and San Bernardino Counties
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WINTER DRIVING TIPS

Inland Empire – Winter weather can be alarming and hazardous for drivers. The best defense is not to venture out on the roads during stormy weather, but if you must drive, use caution, common sense, and always be prepared. Mountain areas and highways in higher elevations also bring snow, ice, and blizzard-like conditions. Below are some helpful tips that might save your life while driving during winter weather.

- First – fill up your gas tank!
- Drive as conditions permit – slower acceleration, slower speeds, and slower braking in winter conditions. Leave extra room between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- Use headlights, not just parking or fog lights in foggy, rainy, and snowy weather. Also remember that you must have your lights on when using your wipers.
- If you get stuck, stay with your vehicle and wait for help.
- If visibility diminishes to the point that you no longer feel safe driving, do not stop in the traffic lanes.
- All vehicles, including those with four-wheel drive or snow tires should carry correctly sized chains when traveling during snowy weather. If traveling to mountain areas you should carry chains between October and April, even if it is not snowing. Weather can be unpredictable and highway signs will indicate if chains are required. If motorists do not have chains in their possession, they may not be allowed to proceed and risk being cited or fined.
- Bring water, food, warm clothing, sturdy shoes/boots, and necessary medications.
- Bring a charged cell phone and your cell phone charger for your vehicle. Bring a flashlight or battery operated radio just in case.
- Make sure your tires are in good condition and your vehicle is running well. Check your coolant, brakes, windshield wipers, defroster/heater, and exhaust systems. If possible winterize your vehicle and have it checked by a professional mechanic before a trip to the mountains or across the desert.
- If chains are required on a roadway, you may install your own chains or use the chain control areas or turnouts close to chain control locations – **NEVER block the roadway** or put chains on next the road or shoulder.
- Use the Caltrans permitted chain installers at the convenient turnout locations. They will have a yellow bib with an official Caltrans Encroachment Permit. **Do not** allow non-permitted chain installers to put chains on your vehicle – for your safety and others.
- Never play in the snow next to or on the roadway – it is dangerous for you, your kids, and other motorists. Don't allow sleds to slide onto the road. **Do not** conduct snow play on private property.



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- Don't have fires or barbeque along the highways or in the turnouts.
- Always park in a safe location or turnout. Watch for "no parking" signs - you don't want to get a ticket, get towed, or have an unfortunate accident.
- Black ice can be nearly invisible so reduce your speeds during and after it snows, especially in turns or shady areas.
- Make room for Caltrans equipment, CHP vehicles, and ***all*** emergency responders. Stay clear of snow plows!
- What to do if you encounter fog:
 - Reduce your speed to allow for safe stopping distance
 - Drive with headlights on low beam, never drive with just parking or fog lights.
 - Use extreme caution when crossing traffic or busy intersections.
 - Lower your window and listen for traffic you cannot see.
 - Use windshield wipers and the defroster to improve visibility.
 - Be patient! Do not pass lines of traffic.
 - If visibility diminishes to the point that you no longer feel safe driving, do not stop in the traffic lanes.
 - Attempt to utilize the closest off-ramp so you can stop at a safe location and wait for the fog to clear.
- Take your trash with you (including diapers) – DON'T TRASH CALIFORNIA!
- Slow down, bring patience, and be courteous. ***Use turnouts if you are holding up traffic.***
- ***Never drink and drive...***

CHAIN CONTROL REQUIREMENT LEVELS:

- R-1: Chains or snow tread tires required. Snow tires must have a tread depth of 6/32" with a "M & S" imprint on the tire's sidewall.
Chains required on all vehicles except four-wheel or all-wheel drives with snow tread tires on all four wheels. Four wheel drives must carry chains. If you have four-wheel drive—engage it. Use the "4-high" range only. Use "4-low" only if your vehicle becomes stuck.
- R-2: Chains required. Four wheel drives must carry chains. If you have four-wheel drive—engage it. Use the "4-high" range only. Use "4-low" only if your vehicle becomes stuck.
- R-3: Chains required - ALL VEHICLES - no exceptions.

Use our "Quick Map" for road conditions, road work, chain control, cameras, and CHP information at <http://quickmap.dot.ca.gov/>.

You may also go to <http://www.ie511.org/> or call "511" from the Inland Empire before you travel.

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